

March 25, 2012

Just say no to the Pebble Mine

Summit Daily

Corkie Ramey, Frisco CO

Thank you Mr. Turner of Fairplay for bringing the atrocity of the Pebble Mine close to Bristol Bay to our attention. There are to major salmon rivers feeding into Bristol Bay. We can not risk losing 40 percent of the world's sockeye salmon with the building of this mine.

The foreign developers have well-documented poor mining practices and equally poor reputations. Just consider 10 billion tons of waste being stored behind earthquake-prone earthen dams. About 150 years ago a great deal of Colorado was decimated by mining. Here in Summit County, we are still having residual problems with pollution after 150+ years. In both instances of the early Colorado miners and the present London consortium, the only interest is gold, copper, silver and molybdenum. We have the largest moly mine in the free world just up the road from us. We don't need another.

One bright spot in Summit is a quite energetic project beginning this summer on the Swan River to correct damage done by early mining. Efforts will eventually restore and reconnect 17 miles of habitat along with 17.5 acres of riparian/wetland areas. The total project will take five to eight years and cost millions of dollars. Can you possibly imagine how long it would take to restore the Alaskan fisheries if even possible. And, if/when the Pebble fails, all of the habitat will be destroyed. The fish, animals, herps, birds, and of course the natives living in the area.

We have seen what mining has done to Summit. Don't let this greed happen in Alaska. I have been to Bristol Bay. It is magnificent. Please go to: www.savebristolbay.org and join the effort to defeat this project.

Fish on!

from Summit Daily

March 20, 2012

Mine threatens Bristol Bay fishery

Summit Daily

Wayne C. Turner, Fairplay CO

I spend a lot of time in the great outdoors hunting and fishing, both in Colorado and all over this wonderful country. One place that I haven't made it to yet is Bristol Bay, in southwest Alaska, where monster-sized trout run in droves and the sockeye salmon arrive up to 40 million strong.

Bristol Bay is on many an outdoorsman's bucket list, and I hope to get there one day (I've fished many other places in Alaska). But I'm worried that Bristol Bay's outstanding natural resources and fisheries won't be there for me, my sons, grandson, or other future generations. That's because they're threatened by the proposal to dig the largest open-pit mine in North America right near the headwaters of multiple fish-bearing streams and waters near Bristol Bay.

This Pebble mine, as it's called, is a truly bad idea. We can't afford to risk 40 percent of the world's sockeye salmon for a mine that will generate 10 billion tons of waste, stored behind earthen dams in an earthquake-prone area. That's why 37 Colorado outdoor groups and businesses have endorsed efforts to protect Bristol Bay. You can learn more or write your representatives on this issue

at www.savebristolbay.org

from Summit Daily

December 23, 2011

Apostles: Scott Hed

The Drake Magazine

Geoff Mueller

Severed by North Dakota, the Saskatchewan plains, Alberta tar-sands, and British Columbia's snow-covered Coast Mountains, Gaylord, Minnesota, is far removed from a proposed large-scale Alaskan mining operation and the toll it would take on anadromous fish runs. But it's in Gaylord that Sportsman's Alliance of Alaska Director Scott Hed had lived a quintessential Midwestern life—playing football and baseball, hunting, fishing, and anxiously awaiting annual pilgrimages to the Boundary Waters Canoe Area—before he started down a path to spearheading the 49th state's highest-profile environmental standoff in recent memory.

Hed attended Minnesota's St. Olaf College, where the aspiring economics and accounting major crunched, chewed, and digested meaty numbers and the intricacies of gain, loss, and risk. Money, it was clear to Hed, made the world spin. And while Oliver Stone's *Wall Street* was hitting paydirt in the late '80s, an aspiring Bud Fox was born.

"When *Wall Street* came out I was going to school, getting my degree in economics, and I'm thinking, 'this is sweet, this is what I want to do,'" Hed says. After graduation, he landed in Marshall, Minnesota, working in the finance industry. It wasn't quite fast cars and fast women, but it was a respectable living that allowed Hed to taste the nine-to-five grind. When his branch expanded to Sioux Falls, South Dakota, Hed followed. It was a busy few years of work and relocation, ascending the corporate escalator, and dreaming of someplace else: Alaska.

Fantasizing about The Last Frontier is a popular office antidote for desk-bound outdoorsmen the world over. But with Hed, it sparked his imagination. Next to work and family life, Alaska became Hed's top distraction. He acquainted himself with the state as a wide-eyed tourist, exploring Denali and the Kenai Peninsula, returning again and again.

"I'd always been good at what I did, and I got paid well to do it," Hed says. "But I wasn't able to get up in the morning, look in the mirror, and say, 'I really have a passion for, and care about, what I'm going to do at work today.'"

Hed's next move came when his Sioux Falls office went bust and handed him a serendipitous 10-month severance package. As Bud Fox states, "Life all comes down to a few moments. This is one of them."

Hed took the cue and headed north to the coast of the Arctic Ocean for a month-long raft trip under a midnight sun. A timely and fortuitous soul cleanse, the trip also opened a door when, upon returning home that summer, a message on the answering machine awaited. It was the Alaska Coalition, with an opportunity to travel to Washington, D.C. and speak on behalf of Alaska as a citizen lobbyist.

"It sounded extremely daunting," Hed says. But he was sold on the message; so much so that one month later he donned a suit and tie, marched up the stairs on Capitol Hill, and let the words pour. D.C. led to more public presentations, touring the upper Midwest for the Coalition, and defending the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge from oil drilling and development.

Hed spoke to whomever had an open ear: church groups, bird gazers, garden hosers, and hunting and fishing advocates from all walks of life. He shined in his new capacity, receiving an expanded territory and a full-time paycheck. Life was good and the gig was rewarding—even easy, considering Alaska's broad appeal. But black clouds were brewing, with whispers of something massive on the horizon: "This thing called Pebble Mine in Bristol Bay," Hed says.

The year was 2006, well before the word "Pebble" had become emblematic of a cancer so big it could devour two of the most prolific sockeye-bearing rivers in the world: the Kvichak and Nushagak. Located at the headwaters of Bristol Bay, Pebble would be the largest gold and copper mine ever built in North America—a gaping open pit, miles wide and several thousand feet deep. If developed, resulting toxins could threaten not only the area's salmon runs, but also the health of an entire ecosystem. Six years after Hed began tunneling for answers to life's proverbial questions, he found his calling in the form of a ticking ecological time bomb.

In October, Hed was at the Jet Hotel in Denver's trendy LoDo district—a hipster receptacle with a full-service bar in the lobby and heavily promoting a Playboy-sponsored "Fantasy Hotel Party". Dressed in a Save Bristol Bay ball cap, muted fleece, and jeans, he was quick to explain he was there for the fight, not the party.

The Save Bristol Bay Road Show had just closed curtains in Seattle, Portland, Corvallis, San Francisco, and Santa Fe. After Denver, the grassroots outreach and advocacy effort would hold one last private event in New York City, but the drain of a multi-city slog was not evident in Hed's demeanor. Upbeat, gregarious, and less slickster D.C. lobbyist than one might expect, the cautiously optimistic Midwesterner says we are now entering decision-making time in the Pebble Mine slugfest. In February 2011, the EPA announced the beginning of its watershed assessment for the region, investigating ecological, cultural, and economic values related to the Kvichak and Nushagak and the potential risks brought forth by large-scale mineral development there. Essentially, if a project like Pebble is deemed detrimental to A) municipal water supplies, B) fisheries, C) wildlife, or D) recreational interests, the EPA under the Clean Water Act holds the power to tank it.

The good news, according to the anti-mine movement, is that the EPA's decision, slated for fall 2012, is a relative no-brainer. "In the case of Bristol Bay," Hed says, "It's easy to argue that all four criteria would be adversely impacted by Pebble, or any large-scale mineral developments." (There are currently 1,000 square miles of claims in the region, in addition to Pebble's.)

But the reality is that the EPA taking that level of action under the Clean Water Act would be unprecedented, and would undoubtedly lead to lawsuits from deep-pocketed developers as well as the heavily pro-development State of Alaska.

Ultimately, Pebble Mine might go down as one of the greatest fisheries conservation victories of our time, thanks in large part to people like Hed. Or, as the scrappy Midwestern economics major put it: "If the world's largest wild salmon fishery and one of the planet's top sportfishing and hunting destinations could be lost to something like Pebble, then everything is on the table."

Geoff Mueller is senior editor at The Drake. A North Vancouver native, he squandered many a work day wandering the Interior rivers and stillwaters of British Columbia. When not handcuffed to the computer, he enjoys deep powder, skinny jeans, and the Poudre River's infamous summer inner-tube hatches. He lives in Fort Collins, CO.

from [The Drake Magazine](#)

November 1, 2011

Great Alaskan fishery faces crippling threat

The Denver Post

Scott Willoughby

It's hard to believe 20 years have passed since the greatest summer of my life. But that's the harsh reality.

Certainly, there have been other contenders for the title through those years, but none that began with a backpack-loaded Jeep CJ and ended in the grand frontier of Alaska. Anyone would be hard-pressed to absorb a more impressive landscape, but for a wide-eyed greenhorn from the Blue Ridge Mountains, the seemingly endless wild country served as a passport to a Pandora's box of adventure.

In hindsight, it's clear I managed to unwittingly escape seemingly certain catastrophe on several occasions. Or maybe I was more clever than adult wisdom cares, or dares, recall.

Stories from that coming-of-age escapade are abundant, but after joining Trout Unlimited's coalition of local and national sportsmen at the Oriental Theater for the "Save Bristol Bay Road Show" last week, just a couple come to mind.

For those unfamiliar with SaveBristolBay.org and its tour featuring the locally produced film "Red Gold," its mission is to educate folks on the threat of the gargantuan Pebble Mine proposed to be built at the headwaters of Bristol Bay, the world's greatest salmon fishery.

The rivers of Bristol Bay make up the world's largest commercial sockeye salmon fishery and arguably its top sport fishery, accounting for a \$360 million annual economy. People, like me, travel from afar to take part in the annual upstream migration, whether for work or wild adventure.

After recently discovering the world's second-largest copper and gold resource at the river headwaters, a multinational mining corporation known as Pebble Limited Partnership (PLP) has applied for permits to develop one of the largest mines on the planet, an open-pit mine estimated at 55 square miles and producing several billion tons of toxic waste requiring treatment and storage in perpetuity.

Needless to say, the Pebble Mine proposal isn't sitting well with the massive fishing industry, given the potential for seepage into ground and surface water in the seismically active area surrounding the vital and pristine Kvichak and Nushagak rivers. That's just the sort of thing that devastates fisheries, and leads to my stories.

Like a lot of young men, my plan in the summer of 1991 was to land in Alaska, walk the docks and hook up with a lucrative commercial fishing job. What none of us counted on was a radical slash in the price the primarily Japanese buyers were willing to pay for wild salmon, prompting veteran fishermen to call a strike at the peak of the run.

As millions of sockeye salmon — the "Red Gold" — swam unimpeded through Bristol Bay to their headwater spawning grounds, hostilities between impassioned fishermen led to slashed nets, tires and occasional airplane wings, fistfights, shotgun blasts and captains using their boats to prevent others from leaving port.

In economic desperation, I did exactly that, abandoning ship to seek a paycheck in Anchorage and enjoy recreational fishing. A co-worker there became the subject of the side story.

My new friend, a native Alaskan, offered to help change the oil in my Jeep after work one day, using the garage at his home and proudly showing off a neighborhood that included a small nearby stream.

"When I was a kid, the salmon used to run all the way up here," he said. "But for some reason they stopped coming."

After we finished, I asked if he had something I could put the used oil into for transport.

"Oh, I just pour it out over there," he said, pointing at a storm drain leading directly into the creek and never pausing to consider the correlation.

I still recall his baffled expression as I tediously poured used motor oil into quart containers fetched from the trash. If there's a further connection to be made, it may be the truly harsh reality that even the greatest wilderness on Earth can be damaged beyond repair by those who might otherwise lead you to believe they care.

There's a lot at stake in this saga — environment, economics, traditions, relationships, politics and more. But with history as a witness, rest assured that Bristol Bay won't go down without a fight.

from [The Denver Post](#)

August 12, 2011

Tim Hogan: Stop Pebble Mine in Alaska

Daily Camera

Tim Hogan

Thanks for the nice piece on local fisherman Matt Aboussie and the salmon he catches from Bristol Bay, Alaska. Made me want to look Matt up and get some of that nutritious sockeye.

On the other hand, I couldn't help but feel the article missed an opportunity to alert Boulder readers to the proposed Pebble Mine. This project would construct one of North America's largest open pit mines in the headwaters of Bristol Bay. The mine would threaten the sustainable fisheries from which Mr.

Aboussie harvests his catch, and despoil an immense watershed that sustains the life-ways of native people and the world in which they have lived for millennia. These lands and waters of southwestern Alaska could be devastated through the schemes of international mining consortiums blinded by the dollar signs of copper, gold, and molybdenum.

Salmon are the ecological linchpin of this ecosystem, weaving together mountainous streams and wetlands with the salty North Pacific, linking orca and grizzly, gray wolf and harbor seal. Surely, if they knew, many of Boulder's foodies might forego a fancy meal and lend their support to the many groups working to stop the Pebble Mine. These defenders of the native people, plants, and animals are easily found with a simple web search.

Tim Hogan

Boulder

from the [Daily Camera](#)

August 9, 2011

Alaska salmon from Bristol Bay to your plate in Boulder

Daily Camera

Cindy Sutter

Matt Aboussie leads a dual life. During the late summer and winter, he sells frozen Alaskan salmon at Denver-area farmers' markets and to people in their homes. In the early summer, he's a fisherman working the salmon run from a remote village on Bristol Bay in Alaska.

"We live alongside bears and caribou, belugas and seals," he says. "Our whole lifestyle is based around fishing and the work that comes with it. Our schedule is dictated by the tides."

In the village, inhabited only during salmon season. Fishermen live in small cabins, but mostly they work, hauling in salmon catches of several tons from nets 50 fathoms long, with 6 feet in a fathom.

The set up begins before the salmon run, when Aboussie and the 11 others who work in his group set an anchor in a tidal mudflat during the lowest tide of the season. The nets are operated with a block and tackle system using a four-wheel drive truck for muscle power, although there's plenty of human muscle also at work, "picking" 8,000 to 10,000 pounds of salmon out of the nets and transporting the day's catch to a processor that cleans and cuts the salmon immediately, freezes it and packs in vacuum-sealed packs. Aboussie and his co-workers catch about 200,000 pounds of salmon during the season. He sells his share to the processor and then buys back about 2,500 pounds to bring to the Front Range to sell. The salmon are sockeye, of which Aboussie is particularly fond.

"That's what I fish for. I think it's the best quality," he says. "It's high in Omega 3s. In the part of the world they come from, Bristol Bay (the water is) cold and unpolluted. It's about the best quality protein you can eat."

In fact, Aboussie eats salmon about three or four times a week.

David Bernson of the Niwot Market's meat department, says the store stocks Aboussie's salmon when fresh, wild salmon is not available.

However, he says, he has faced a dilemma at times when Aboussie's salmon looked better than the fresh stuff.

"(The processor) flash freezes it," Bernson says. "It's a lot different than if you buy fresh and freeze it in your own freezer. Because (the freezing) is done so quickly, (the fish is) really just as good as if you'd gotten it right out of the ocean there in Alaska."

Jeff Kinder, a customer who lives in Cold Creek Canyon, says he likes the salmon both for its taste and its eco-friendliness.

"I like the fact that it's wild and coming from a very sustainable fishery," Kinder says.

"It is always good," he adds. "Just a little butter, tarragon and lemon and let it bake," he adds.

In another favorite preparation, his wife sometimes uses ginger, cilantro, lime, garlic and jalapeno.

"That is used as a brief marinade. It starts a ceviche process," he says. They quickly remove it from the marinade and put it on a hot grill and serve with udon noodles.

Aboussie says his customers like the fish for its flavor and for the story behind it.

"It's a way for people to be connected. They know where this food comes from," he says. "They can buy from a fisherman fishing there in Bristol Bay where they were caught."

The best part for Aboussie is being part of the story.

"I look forward to (fishing) all year," he says. "It has gotten into my blood, the whole experience, getting there by a skiff ride across Bristol Bay or a small plane. There's no electricity, no running water, no cell phones. You're able to focus. You're more in tune with whatever's happening around you -- the weather, nature, the tides. You're able to connect with the place you're in, you're really living as a part of it.

from the Daily Camera

March 7, 2012

Ripple Effect

The Mining Journal

Tim Osmar and Monica Zappa

To the Journal editor:

We would like to extend a big thank you to Marquette and the Upper Peninsula Sled Dog Association for hosting the U.P. 200 Sled Dog Race. Our journey was long, and it was great to spend the last week of our trip in Michigan's beautiful Upper Peninsula. You probably saw us mushing or driving by, and might have noticed No Pebble Mine or Save Bristol Bay signs.

That's because Marquette was the final stop of our tour to raise awareness about dangers of a proposed gold/copper mine to Bristol Bay, Alaska, home of the world's largest sockeye salmon fishery. We received much support for our cause and we know that people in Michigan love to eat wild Alaskan salmon. In fact, half of all the wild salmon sold here comes from Bristol Bay so we plan to keep working to make sure that you will always have delicious and healthy salmon to enjoy.

Mining has a strong history and presence in Michigan and Alaska. We understand there are benefits of the industry and we are not opposed to all mining. We trust the people of Michigan know what is best for their state, as we know that Pebble Mine is not right for Alaska. If built, Pebble would have many ripple effects for fish, wildlife and the more than 12,000 people whose jobs and lifestyle depend on clean water.

We need a guarantee that another manmade environmental disaster will not happen in Alaska, and that means preventing a massive open-pit mine, over half a mile deep and two miles wide. Pebble plans to store 10 billion tons of toxic tailings behind huge dams, larger than the Three Gorges in China. A mine of this scale has never been constructed in such a seismically active area or sensitive fish habitat and Bristol Bay is not the place for a big experiment.

We feel that Pebble is the biggest recipe for disaster that Alaska has ever faced, and that's why we have spent the last six weeks in the Midwest mushing to Save Bristol Bay. Thank you Michigan for caring about Alaska. Thank you Rio Tinto for supporting the U.P. 200 and listening to our message.

You have shown that mining companies can have a good relationship with their community, as it is clear that you have worked hard to achieve. We hope that Pebble Partnership will also listen to the people of Alaska.

Tim Osmar, Monica Zappa

Kasilof, Alaska

from The Mining Journal

February 22, 2012

Proposed open pit Pebble Mine threatens important Alaska salmon fishery

Keweenaw Now

Carol Johnson Pfefferkorn

HANCOCK -- Bristol Bay, Alaska, described as a "gem in a jewel," is being threatened by a potential open pit mine called Pebble Mine. Last night, Feb. 21, at the Orpheum Theater in Hancock, the Copper Country Chapter of Trout Unlimited (CCCTU) hosted two Alaskan dog mushers, Monica Zappa and Tim Osmar, who have decked their sleds, truck and dog coats, and traveled thousands of miles to bring attention to the dangers to Bristol Bay from an open pit mining proposal. They raced in the UP 200 dogsled race and hosted three screenings of a documentary, Red Gold: the Pebble Mine Debate, about Bristol Bay.

According to SaveBristolBay.org., "The Pebble deposit is a massive storehouse of gold, copper and molybdenum, located in the headwaters of the Kvichak and Nushagak Rivers, two of the eight major rivers that feed Bristol Bay. If built, Pebble would be one of the largest mines in the world. Because of its size, geochemistry and location, Pebble runs a high risk of polluting Bristol Bay, one of the world's few and most productive wild salmon strongholds that supports a \$500 million commercial and sport fishery. For this reason, Trout Unlimited is working with a diverse group of fishermen, guides, lodge owners, Alaska Natives, scientists, chef, restaurant owners, seafood lovers and many others to try to stop the Pebble development and to protect Bristol Bay."**

Save Bristol Bay also notes the proposed mine developers, the Pebble Limited Partnership (PLP), are a consortium of the world's second largest multinational mining corporation, London-based Anglo American, and Northern Dynasty, a junior mining company headquartered in Canada.

Opponents of the mine are critical of Anglo American's environmental track record Northern Dynasty's lack of environmental experience since it has never before developed a mine. PLP's preliminary designs indicate that the Pebble Mine complex would span 20 square miles of state land in the Bristol Bay watershed. The proposed mine -- an open pit up to 4,000 feet deep and 2.3 miles wide -- would produce up to 10.8 billion tons of waste rock, resulting in one or more of the world's largest tailings storage facilities.

"Located in a seismically active region, Pebble would require the world's largest earthen dam to be built, some 700 feet high and several miles in length. Independent scientists have questioned whether the dam could withstand the force of a massive earthquake, such as the 9.2 quake that devastated Anchorage in 1964."**

The Wild Salmon Center and Trout Unlimited have produced a report examining the proposed Pebble Mine and its potential impacts on the wild salmon fishery of Bristol Bay.

Examining a wide body of studies, reports, and the best available scientific information, the report analyzes preliminary proposals for the mine, concluding there is too much at stake ecologically, economically, and culturally to risk development of the Pebble deposit.***

Preliminary proposals and studies presented by developers indicate that the Pebble Mine: contains ore that has a high likelihood of generating acid mine drainage, which is severely harmful to salmon and other aquatic species;

will produce up to 10.8 billion tons of waste rock, requiring miles of tailings dams initially proposed up to 740 feet high;

may use 35 billion gallons of fresh water per year, more than three times the usage of Anchorage, Alaska's largest city; and

will construct multiple sources of contamination, including: an open pit and underground mine, an 86 mile road and pipeline route, a deep-water port and other infrastructure.

"This report shows the far-reaching impacts that development of the Pebble deposit would have on Bristol Bay's world-class salmon fishery and largely pristine watersheds," said Guido Rahr, President of the Wild Salmon Center. "In addition to risks posed by the chronic leaching of contaminants or a catastrophic failure, the proposed mine would substantially alter the hydrology, water table, and available habitat for salmon, which are extremely sensitive to changes in their environment."

An unprecedented coalition of Alaska Native tribes and corporations, sportsmen, commercial fishermen and others have asked the EPA to protect Bristol Bay by withdrawing the watershed as a disposal site for dredge and fill activities under Section 404(c) of the Clean Water Act. The EPA is currently conducting a scientific assessment of the Bristol Bay watershed to determine whether large-scale development would adversely impact the region's natural resources.

The documentary Red Gold describes Bristol Bay, with its commercial and sports fishery, as a fully-functioning ecosystem that would be destroyed by the proposed Pebble Mine. The film shows all sides of the debate -- from industry officials to the people of Bristol Bay -- Native, commercial and sport

fishermen -- whose way of life depends on this important fishery.

A representative of Northern Dynasty Mines, interviewed in the film, said, "We will not be swayed by environmentalists who say we will cause an ecological disaster. Fish can exist right alongside the copper mine. It will not destroy the fish."

Mayor Ole, self-proclaimed mayor of Bristol Bay, said, "This is just a wrong idea in the wrong place."

At a "Stop the Pebble Mine" rally, local residents urged state and federal lawmakers to defeat the proposal, saying this mine would change their lives forever.

"Salmon are a part of our life. We were raised by salmon. It's where we come from, what we were born to," residents said.

About 60 people watched the film in the Orpheum Theater. Many enjoyed free beer and pizza during the introduction by the visiting dog mushers. Afterwards some expressed their impressions of the film. Tom Rozich, President of the Copper Country Chapter of Trout Unlimited, said he felt the documentary was well done, gave equal time to both sides, and offered enough information so that individuals will be able to make an informed decision about open pit mining.

Personally, Rozich added, he feels that, using current technology, Pebble Mine is not going anywhere.

The mine waste generated would ruin the fragile environment, which is not acceptable.

However, he noted that some day, once technology improves to the point that mining can occur safely, without hurting the environment, without destroying waters and wildlife, it will happen.

Houghton resident Jim Curtis said, "Somehow we have to figure out how we can get the resources we need without ruining the environment. Mining has a huge impact on our society."

Notes:

* Keweenaw Now guest writer Carol Johnson Pfefferkorn recently moved to the Keweenaw from the Menominee area. In addition to writing, she is assisting Keweenaw Now with advertising and public relations.

** See savebristolbay.org to read more about the Pebble Mine.

*** Click [here](#) for a summary of the report. To download a full copy of the report, [click here](#).
from [Keweenaw Now](#)

February 17, 2012

Sled dog weekend launches in city

The Mining Journal

Johanna Boyle

MARQUETTE - Mushers from many different backgrounds and racing experiences gathered at the Holiday Inn in Marquette Thursday for the mushers banquet and bib draw, kicking off the Upper Peninsula Sled Dog Association U.P. 200 weekend.

Running as a rookie in the U.P. 200 this year is Alaskan musher Tim Osmar. A salmon fisherman in the summers, Osmar has completed the Iditarod 23 times, often placing in the top 10 for the race, and has won the Yukon Quest, another long-distance but less well known Alaskan race.

"Heard it was a nice place," Osmar said of the Marquette area. "(We came) just to see it and check it out."

With some younger dogs in his kennel, Osmar said the U.P. 200 this year was a chance to rebuild his team.

Also racing in the U.P. 200 is Osmar's mushing partner Monica Zappa. Zappa and Osmar are on the fourth leg of a tour of races and speaking events throughout the Midwest. They have also run races in Minnesota, Wisconsin and Ontario, Canada.

Another unique first-time racer this year is Midnight Run rookie Gerhardt Thiart, running dogs from Magnusson Racing of downstate Cheboygan. Thiart is only in his second season of racing in the United States, visiting from his native South Africa.

"There's no snow in South Africa," he said. "We do dry land sledding."

Wanting to learn more about mushing with different types of dogs than the Siberian huskies that are usually used in South Africa, Thiart found a job with the Magnusson kennel and started racing stateside. Having completed several sprint races, including the Copper Dog in the Keweenaw Peninsula, Thiart said he enjoyed the atmosphere of the Marquette community.

"Just the social gathering," he said. "The whole community gets together. It's like a festival feeling. You just hang out with your dogs and have fun."

Both Thiart and Osmar said they were hoping for nothing but a safe race with the dogs finishing in good condition.

In the Midnight Run, Amber Evans of Milaca, Minn., drew bib number 101 for the lead spot with Jerry Papke of Kingston, Minn., drawing the second spot. For the U.P. 200, Amanda Vogel of Ray, Minn., drew the first slot while David Gill of Skandia drew the second. A full list of mushers and their starting positions will be available online at up200.org.

The Jack Pine 30 holds its own bib draw Saturday morning prior to the start of the race.

Although both the Midnight Run and the U.P. 200 have their official starts tonight in Chatham, the Midnight Run's ceremonial start will be held in downtown Marquette, with 30 sled teams starting at 7:10 p.m.

Crews were working early this morning to prepare the the Midnight Run starting area, setting up roadblocks and spreading truckloads of snow downtown. Mushers and their teams, meanwhile, attended the mandatory vet check this morning at the Riverside Auto parking lot in Marquette.

Opening ceremonies for the races start at 6:30 tonight right in front of The Mining Journal's office on West Washington Street.

from [The Mining Journal](#)

February 17, 2012

And they're off! Sled dogs take on UP 200

Upper Michigan Source

Ana Simovska

CHATHAM -- Mushers took off from Chatham Friday evening to mark off the 2012 UP 200 sled dog race. Despite the mild start to the winter and some concerns about shortage of snow for the race, it all went as planned. Friday's low temperatures made for perfect racing conditions.

And just like that, one by one, 24 teams took off in the dark night. Although the mild winter brought just enough snow, one thing it didn't bring was the wind.

"We didn't have 40 mph winds like we had last year; weather's been fairly nice," said Start Coordinator Sarah Kimball.

Mushers warmed up their dogs just before 8 p.m. before taking on the 240-mile trail. One team came from Alaska and searched around the Midwest to find the white stuff. And they found it here. It's their first race of the year, and they're doing it for a special cause...raising awareness for Bristol Bay, Alaska where a pebble mine could risk the future of salmon.

"It could potentially mess up the salmon stream. A lot of toxins come out of there when they do this kind of mining, and it inevitably will leak in the water," said musher Tim Osmar.

They're hoping to defeat this reigning champion. This year, Ryan Anderson returns to claim the title for the third year in a row and says he hopes the lack of snow this winter has evened out the playing field.

"Everybody's been kind of in the same boat," said Anderson. "They've been training dogs at 28 degrees all winter long depending on where they're coming from; I think most places it's been in the 20s all year, low snow conditions, so I think a lot of people just recently got on sleds."

The Midnight Run kicked off at 10 p.m. Mushers are heading to Wetmore, then Grand Marais, and back all the way around where they will cross the finish line in Grand Marais on Sunday.
from the Upper Michigan Source

February 16, 2012

Alaska mushers make a stop in Petoskey

Petoskey News

Morgan Sherburne

This weekend, Alaskan mushers Tim Osmar and Monica Zappa will be competing in the Upper Peninsula 200 race.

But last night, they were at the Crooked Tree Arts Center to raise awareness about a mining complex, called the Pebble Mine, proposed in southwest Alaska.

"This fall, we were in Wisconsin (where Zappa is from), canoeing and talking about plans for our sled-dog racing tour," said Osmar, who grew up in Alaska. "Rather than getting a sponsor, we decided we would mush for a good cause. The Pebble Mine was a no-brainer."

Sponsored by Trout Unlimited, a nationwide conservation organization, and last night hosted by the Miller Van Winkle Chapter of Trout Unlimited, the two mushers have been showing the documentary "Red Gold" as they mush through Wisconsin, Minnesota, Ontario and Michigan.

The documentary details the fight between sport and commercial anglers, the Alaskan people who rely on salmon, and the companies that want to develop the mine.

Zappa said she and Osmar wrote proposals to Trout Unlimited, which had done a similar tour, showing the documentary to raise awareness of the mine on the west coast of the United States.

Osmar and Zappa are also representatives of the organization called "Save Bristol Bay."

If it's opened, the mine would be one of the largest in the world, covering an area of 54.4 square miles and containing approximately 7.5 billion tons of ore.

The controversy lies in the size and value of the mine.

"Mines aren't new in Alaska," said Zappa. "There was a gold rush. This is nothing new. But the size is new. This mine would be 20 times the size of all other mines in Alaska."

Northern Dynasty and Anglo American, the companies hoping to develop the mine, say the mine has the potential to produce 80.6 billion pounds of copper, 107.4 million ounces of gold and 5.6 billion pounds of molybdenum -- a metal used in steel alloys -- over 80 years.

Its value is estimated between \$300 and \$500 billion, and proponents of the mine say that it could create thousands of jobs for Alaska residents over its 30-60 year lifespan.

But the Pebble Mine would be opened in the Bristol Bay watershed -- the watershed for rivers that are home to the world's largest sockeye salmon industry. An estimated 40 million salmon return to their home rivers through Bristol Bay, and an estimated half of all wild salmon sold in the United States come from the area.

Environmentalists and sport anglers argue that the mine, its water use and its estimated 2.5-10 billion tons of mine waste would jeopardize the eight major rivers that feed into Bristol Bay.

The mine would use 35 billion gallons of water annually from the Bristol Bay watershed in order to operate.

Bristol Bay's rivers support a renewable resource for livelihood of sport and commercial fisheries -- what the Save Bristol Bay organization says is a \$500 million industry.

During the question-and-answer period after the showing of the documentary, one audience member asked what the residents of Alaska thought of the mine.

Osmar responded: "Over half the people in Alaska are opposed to it, 90 percent of the fishermen -- and 100 percent of the bears."

from the Petoskey-News

February 26, 2012

What happens in Bristol Bay will come our way

Santa Fe New Mexican

Toner Mitchell, Santa Fe NM

Covering nearly 54,000 square miles, Alaska's Bristol Bay region is home to the world's largest runs of sockeye salmon. The commercial fishery employs more than 12,000 people and generates nearly \$500 million in annual revenue. This is the modern version of an economy from which Alaska Natives and a bounty of plants and animals have drawn sustenance from the salmon life cycle for more than 10,000 years.

This unique ecosystem is in the sights of mining conglomerate Pebble Limited Partnership, which hopes to extract copper, gold and molybdenum from the headwaters of several major Bristol Bay watersheds. A majority of Bristol Bay area residents oppose the Pebble Mine, as do most Alaskans. All told, opposition to this project is strong across income levels, ethnicities and political spectra.

The reason for this near total opposition is simply that the Pebble Mine is a bad idea. The ore body in question is of extremely low grade, meaning that 99 percent of what is dug will be waste product that, through natural oxidation processes, will likely become acidic and will have to be stored on-site forever. Conservative estimates of the quantity of waste stretch to 10 billion tons. The earthen dams containing it, some of the largest ever constructed, may be several miles long and up to 740 feet high and will hold back waste reservoirs encompassing 20 square miles. The only factors that could make this scenario worse would be if waste were stored in an area known for frequent earthquakes and an extremely shallow water table. Well, guess what, those conditions are present, too.

There are many reasons why we, as New Mexicans and Americans, should join the effort to stop the Pebble Mine. Instead of going into the fact that a large portion of the mine's trumpeted jobs and profits will land in other countries (the Pebble Partners are based in Canada and England), let's focus on the amazing economic food chain originating in Bristol Bay. If you eat sockeye salmon in Santa Fe, there is a 40 percent chance it was born in a Bristol Bay stream. In addition to the fishing jobs the sockeye sustains, there are processors, truckers, neighborhood grocers, waiters and busboys from Boston to Tokyo who derive a part of their livelihoods because of the unpolluted waters flowing into Bristol Bay. Bristol Bay is also home to a multimillion-dollar recreation industry serving hunters and fishermen from around the world (including New Mexico, evident at a recent hunting and fishing expo in Albuquerque, where several Alaska destinations were featured). As a former Bristol Bay fishing guide, I can say with absolute certainty that there is no better wild rainbow trout fishery in North America for fish size, numbers and quality of habitat.

Each summer, I lead a trip to the region's Nushagak River, an adventure that generates revenue for my Santa Fe-based fly fishing store, an outfitter in California, restaurants and hotels in Anchorage and Dillingham, Alaska, the lodge owner from Montana, and his guides from Washington, Montana, and Michigan. Americans are clamoring for the type of stable, diverse, and sustainable economy exemplified by Bristol Bay's sports fishery and hunting paradise. New Mexicans, dependent as we are on the bounty of our landscape, should appreciate this as much as anyone.

Put another way, we New Mexicans appreciate the intrinsic value and power in the unique. Indeed, New Mexico's vital tourism industry is based on celebrating our one-of-a-kind places: Acoma Pueblo and the Gila, the Rio Grande Gorge, the gorgeous cliffs of Abiquiú, the Valle Vidal. It pains me to think these wonders might have a price, that the Sandia front might be rendered into rubble or that the Valles Caldera could be inundated beneath a pond of mine waste. I'm sure we'd raise our voices if push came to shove, just as we should for Bristol Bay; for if ever we should lose it, there will be no bringing it back. Time is of the essence to stop this destructive project. To learn more about what you can do, please visit savebristolbay.org.

*Santa Fean Toner Mitchell is the manager of The Reel Life Fly Shop.
from the Santa Fe New Mexican*

November 29, 2011

Too good to lose...NM anglers help to protect Alaska fishery they love

New Mexico Wildlife Federation Outdoor Reporter

Joel Gay

Charlie Domenici, proprietor of Charlie's Sporting Goods in Albuquerque, has been in the fishing business for more than 40 years but the memory of his first trip to Alaska's famed Bristol Bay still brings a sparkle to his 82-year-old eyes.

"I never saw so many fish in a river," he said recently as he stirred epoxy and prepared to fix a rod at his workshop bench. "You could almost walk on their backs."

Bob Gerding, the Albuquerque outfitter, TV and radio show host and the man behind Bob Gerding's Outdoor Adventures, visited Bristol Bay in the late 1970s and still goes back regularly. "Alaska is a unique experience — you see more, you do more," he said. "It's just an amazing, amazing place."

Toner Mitchell, a Santa Fe fishing guide and fly shop manager, has been taking New Mexico clients to Bristol Bay for years but said he is still in awe every time he goes north. "There's just nothing like it in the universe," he said. "We'll be flying in and everyone is talking, then all of sudden they all shut up — they're just looking out the window in awe."

For thousands of anglers worldwide, Alaska is the promised land. It's a place they dream about, save up to visit and hopefully wet a line in. But dark clouds are building over some of the most fabled fishing streams of the promised land today, the pristine rivers of the Bristol Bay region.

The threat stems from the proposed Pebble Mine. Located in the headwaters of two of the most productive salmon rivers in the world, Pebble would be the largest open-pit copper and gold mine in North America.

The mine would create around 1,000 permanent jobs and return a pretty profit to its owners in Canada and England. But it also would create billions of pounds of toxic waste that could harm or kill salmon and rainbow trout and the fishing businesses that depend on them.

Opposition to the Pebble Mine is growing from Alaska to New Mexico and beyond. Advocates for protecting Bristol Bay are spreading the word and pinning their hopes on the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, which will decide in the next year whether to issue permits for the multi-billion-dollar mine development.

"Protecting Bristol Bay is currently the No. 1 conservation issue for the U.S. fly fishing industry," said Jim Klug, chairman of the American Fly Fishing Trade Association. "More than 150 sport fishing product companies have directly signed on to support protecting Bristol Bay's fish and game habitat and economic resources, and hundreds more have voiced their opposition to Pebble Mine. We strongly urge the EPA and Obama administration to protect this amazing place."

Many rivers run through it

Bristol Bay makes up much of the southwest corner of Alaska. The watershed has thousands of lakes, hundreds of smaller streams and nine major rivers that hold the world's biggest and healthiest runs of salmon and rainbow trout. The watershed itself is larger than Kentucky, Indiana and a dozen other states.

The Pebble Mine development would straddle the divide between the Nushagak River drainage and Lake Iliamna, which flows into the Kvichak River. The Nushagak hosts the largest king salmon run in the world, while the Kvichak (kwee-jack) has the world's largest sockeye run.

With all those salmon returning every year, both rivers also have vast runs of rainbow trout, which feed on salmon eggs and can grow to 18 pounds. Tent camps and lodges draw anglers from all over the world, creating thousands of jobs every summer and fall.

Pebble threatens the clean water that fish and fishermen depend on. The mine would use some 35 billion gallons of fresh water a year and create up to 10.8 billion tons of highly acidic mine tailings. The mine's wastewater would be held in place by one of the world's largest earthen dams – more than 4 miles long and 750 feet high.

But the tailings dam would have to be maintained forever to prevent pollution from reaching the fish-rich waters downstream. That's a tall order because the mine development sits on one of the most active earthquake faults in the world.

The idea of building such a large mine in the Bristol Bay headwaters is crazy, said Domenici. On his first flight to a fishing lodge on the Kvichak River, he recalls looking out the floatplane window and seeing pothole lakes and creeks everywhere. "There was more water than land."

That wet landscape makes the idea of keeping pollution out of fish streams seem ludicrous, said Domenici. "It could really wreck that whole country. They (the mining industry) don't have a very clean record."

He's right, according to a 2006 study that looked at 25 modern, large hard rock mines in the United States. It compared water quality after the mines were constructed versus the water quality reductions in the permitting stage and found that 76 percent of the mines exceeded their expected water quality standards.

And when the 15 mines most like Pebble – where tailings were in close proximity to groundwater or surface water – were considered separately, 14 out of the 15 exceeded water quality standards for such toxic substances such as lead, arsenic and cyanide.

In fact, the hard rock mining industry is the largest toxic polluter in the country, according to figures from the EPA.

Sportsmen unite for clean water

The Pebble complex would cover more than 50 square miles – roughly one third of Valles Caldera National Preserve. With hundreds of permits required before construction can begin, opponents are urging the state of Alaska and EPA to step up on behalf of the region's valuable fisheries, which are worth some \$450 million a year to the state's economy.

Thousands of jobs in the Bristol Bay region depend on clean water. The sportfish industry alone supports the equivalent of 1,225 full-time, year-round jobs, and the region's 125-year-old commercial fishing industry provides nearly 3,600 more. As long as the fish keep running, the jobs will return as well.

The EPA could exercise its authority under the Clean Water Act to restrict or prohibit the disposal of mine waste around the mine site, including the wetlands. Last February the EPA began to evaluate the suitability of the mine. That study will form the basis of its final decision on the required clean water permits.

In the meantime, fishermen have joined forces with outfitters, Bristol Bay region residents, Alaska Native tribes and sporting goods business owners all over the country to speak up for the water, fish and the area's multi-million-dollar fishing industry. The list of opponents includes many of the biggest names in the hook-and-bullet community including Simms, Sage, Orvis, Redington and Ruger.

Charlie Domenici's son, Chuck, is also familiar with Bristol Bay and the Iliamna Lake region after a decade of regular trips to Alaska. He immediately threw his support to the Save Bristol Bay campaign after hearing about it. Like his father, Chuck doesn't see the sense in building something that threatens an entire region and the long-term economic value of salmon and trout fishing.

"You understand the value of the mine," the younger Domenici said. But after personally experiencing the power of Alaska's weather and understanding the seismic activity in the region, he said he worries whether the mine operators could keep the toxic pollution in place.

"Just one mistake could devastate that whole fishery and ruin it for our kids and grandkids forever," he said. "It's not like something you could rebuild."

Bob Gerding agreed. "I think it's absolutely foolish. When they talk about employment for that mine, it's a drop in the bucket compared to how many people it would take out of work."

Thousands of New Mexicans hunt or fish in Alaska every year. Some, like Gerding, went because they read about it as kids. Or like the Domenicis, they heard the stories of friends who just got back. Others, like Toner Mitchell, have seen it and can't stay away. Eli Huffman, a New Mexican who has been fishing in western Alaska for 30 years and now runs a seasonal tent camp and guided fishing operation on the Nushagak, is dumbfounded that anyone could propose such a huge threat to such a special place.

"To me it's insane," he said. "One accident from one mine could kill it all." Even more troubling, Huffman said, is that Pebble threatens the future of a truly unique fishing experience, a place where an angler can still expect to catch 100 or 150 salmon in a week. "That still happens on the Nushagak," he said. "I'm totally heartbroken over the idea that while my children have experienced that, my grandchildren have not."

Sportsmen need to let the EPA and New Mexico's U.S. Senators know this is an important issue. To learn more and to take action, visit www.SaveBristolBay.org. You can also contact Scott Hed at the Sportsman's Alliance for Alaska (Scott@SportsmansAlliance4AK.org) to get involved further.

from page 3 of the [New Mexico Wildlife Federation Outdoor Reporter](#)

October 24, 2011

Battle to protect Alaska salmon fishery comes to New Mexico

Taos News

Nick Streit

I will always remember the season I spent guiding in the wilds of Alaska. Everything was big, the country, the fish, and especially the Mosquitos. I lived in a tent camp and spent seven days a week on the river chasing five species of Salmon, Trout, Grayling and Dolly Varden. The place remains to this day pristine and untouched where anglers can still experience the "good ole days" of fly fishing.

Unfortunately, this may change as the most prolific trout and salmon fishery in Alaska is sitting on top of one of the world's largest deposits of Copper, Gold and Molybdenum.

A consortium of foreign mining companies is proposing to construct North America's largest open-pit mine in the headwaters of Alaska's most productive wild salmon rivers. Bristol Bay is a remote region, a few hundred miles southwest of Anchorage and reachable only by air or water. The region is home to salmon runs tallying tens of millions of fish annually. The fishery provides employment for roughly 12,000 people in the commercial fishing industry. Sport fishing attracts anglers from across the globe in pursuit of trophy rainbow trout. This translates into about \$450 million in annual economic benefit. Hunters chase brown bear, moose, and caribou across the tundra. The area has sustained a Native culture for thousands of years. And it all depends on the salmon, and healthy salmon runs are reliant on healthy habitat.

The Pebble Mine (as it is to be called) is enough of a threat that it has united the three user groups in the region that have traditionally been adversaries. Native residents, commercial fishermen, and sportsmen are rallying to protect the renewable resource which sustains them all: the salmon. From catch and release anglers to big game hunters, fly rod makers to firearms manufacturers, all are saying we must protect Bristol Bay. Others taking a stand include hundreds of chefs, restaurants, and dozens of major jewelers (including no less than Tiffany&Co.).

So, what can we do from New Mexico? The Environmental Protection Agency has the authority to protect Bristol Bay, and they must hear from concerned citizens to do so. We need to let our members of Congress know this is an important issue.

Protecting Bristol Bay is protecting American jobs, it's something that anglers and hunters are asking for, and it's possibly keeping another Superfund site off the American taxpayers' collective back.

New Mexico State Coverage of Pebble Mine

Nick Streit owns a fly shop and guiding business with his dad in northern New Mexico; they're both leaders of the TU chapter in Taos, NM. Nick guided for a season in Alaska (but not Bristol Bay proper) and writes for Taos News.
from Taos News

April 6, 2012

Why Corvallis should help stop open pit mine in Alaska

Corvallis Gazette-Times

Kate Taylor, Corvallis OR

This summer will be my fifth year heading up to Bristol Bay, Alaska, to guide sport fishing clients in one of the most remarkably wild places left on Earth. Three other friends of mine from Corvallis will also be traveling north to make a majority of their income this way.

In late fall, we will all likely return to Corvallis.

I'm writing to draw attention to an issue threatening our livelihood: A foreign mining company is planning the largest open-pit mine in North America at the headwaters of Bristol Bay. Calling it the Pebble Mine, it is a huge risk for natural resources, sustainable fisheries and the many jobs it supports. Salmon play a major role in the history and economy of Oregon and the Pacific Northwest. We know all too well the effects of habitat degradation and how our wild fisheries are nearly a fraction of what they once were. An epic battle is currently being waged in the Northwest to restore the critical spawning and rearing habitat so we can once again have healthy runs of wild fish.

Bristol Bay is what the Northwest once was: wild, pristine and sustainable. It is a place where the wild fish keep returning, the industry still thrives and there is no need for \$16 million hatchery schemes. It's a place where there is enough wild fish to go around as long as the habitat stays unmolested.

I urge my fellow Pacific Northwesterner to help protect this extraordinary place.

Kate Taylor

Corvallis

From the [Corvallis Gazette-Times](#)

March 30, 2012

Alaska mine decision critical to Oregon fishing industry

Portland Business Journal

Alan Hummel and Jack Whitney

Salmon has played an integral role in Oregon's history. It has sustained native tribes for centuries, is part of the economic backbone that built this state and remains a critical component of our cultural identity. Though not likely common knowledge amongst Oregonians, many in Oregon's commercial and sports fishing industries depend on Alaska fisheries for their livelihoods.

And no fishing grounds in Alaska are more critical than those of Bristol Bay. Home to the world's largest sockeye and king salmon runs, the bay and its tributary rivers support \$500 million a year in sport and commercial fishing — providing jobs to over 12,000 people. More than 500 Oregon commercial fishermen, pilots, operators and sport fishing guides travel to Bristol Bay each summer for work. In addition, Bristol Bay provides certified sustainable salmon to top eateries across Oregon and numerous supermarkets and grocers. Ocean Beauty Seafoods sold more than 200,000 pounds of wild Bristol Bay Sockeye to Oregonians in 2011, more than 18,000 pounds was sold in New Season Markets to Portland consumers.

That is why Oregon has a critical stake in the future of Bristol Bay and the impact of the proposed Pebble Mine, which would be the largest open pit mine in North America.

If built, the mine would require massive waste tailing pools, which would accumulate as much as 10 billion tons of toxic waste behind earthen dams. These dams must be maintained in perpetuity. One flood or earthquake, or even the gradual seepage of this waste, would put the entire fishery at risk. The future of this dangerous proposal currently rests in the hands of the Environmental Protection Agency, which has been conducting a review of the potential impacts of large-scale development on the

Bristol Bay watershed at the request of commercial and sport fishermen, Alaskan Natives and other groups.

The review is nearly complete and the evidence is overwhelming that this mine cannot be allowed to threaten Bristol Bay salmon. That is why more than 50 Oregon business and fishing conservation groups have written the EPA to support the Bristol Bay Watershed Assessment and use its authority to prevent the Pebble Mine from being developed.

Oregon U.S. Sen. Jeff Merkley and Gov. John Kitzhaber have stood up for our fishing-related industries, writing the EPA to endorse its Bristol Bay Watershed Assessment.

We applaud Sen. Merkley and Gov. Kitzhaber for their leadership on this issue, which is of critical importance to Oregon's future. We encourage President Obama to support the EPA's decision and our fishing families by protecting one of the last remaining great salmon runs in our nation.

Alan Hummel is the director of meat and seafood at Portland-based New Seasons Market. Jack Whitney is senior distribution manager at Seattle-based Ocean Beauty Seafoods. He is based in Portland.

March 12, 2012

Guest Viewpoint: Protection of Alaska's fishery benefits Oregon

The Register-Guard

Russell Bassett

Soon it will be spring chinook season, a time when fishermen throughout Oregon begin gearing up for an annual tradition of family, sport, harvest and food.

No longer do creeks in the Willamette Valley fill with salmon, but Oregonians still celebrate their return. You can see it in our art, menus, stories and the boats in our driveways. It is also a time when guides and commercial fishermen start thinking about another season in Alaska's Bristol Bay.

Bristol Bay is home to one of the Earth's most prolific fisheries. Up to 40 million sockeye salmon return to Bristol Bay each year, making it the world's largest run.

In addition, there are stunning king salmon (the largest runs in Alaska) and trophy rainbow trout, along with several other fish species.

Large-scale mineral development such as the Pebble Mine, proposed to be dug at the headwaters of Bristol Bay's best wild salmon rivers, would severely degrade this national treasure. The Pebble Mine, pursued by two foreign companies, would extract gold, copper and molybdenum, but the ore is low-grade and filled with sulfur.

At the same time, the U.S. Bureau of Land Management wants to open a million adjacent acres to hard-rock mining in this pristine watershed, which is coursed by rivers, streams, creeks and lakes.

The proposed Pebble Mine and Bristol Bay Mining District may pose the greatest single threat to Alaska's salmon-bearing rivers and the communities and fisheries that depend upon them.

If built, the Pebble Mine will:

Generate up to 10 billion tons of toxic mine waste that would be held behind massive earthen dams located in an unstable seismic zone prone to earthquakes.

Require development of a 100-mile road into wilderness and construction of a power plant big enough to supply the city of Anchorage.

Siphon nearly 35 billion gallons of water a year, critically reducing flow to multiple salmon rivers.

According to the federal Environmental Protection Agency, the hard rock mining industry is the single largest source of toxic waste in the country. History has shown that these mines often have devastating impacts on human health and on fish populations. The toxic byproducts of open-pit mines such as Pebble put millions of salmon at great risk because they are sensitive to even tiny concentrations of certain metals, including copper.

In Oregon, the 76-acre Formosa Mine Superfund Site in the South Umpqua drainage was mined for copper and zinc. In 1997, the acid mine drainage control system failed and toxic pollution was released

into the South Fork of Middle Creek and elsewhere downstream.

Eighteen miles of fish habitat below the mine was severely degraded, and the fishery that had thrived prior to this time was destroyed. Taxpayers are now footing the bill to clean up the Formosa Mine, which is only a very small fraction of the size of the Pebble Mine, projected at 54.5 square miles.

The wild, sustainable fisheries of Bristol Bay generate \$450 million for Alaska's economy each year, and sport fishing is responsible for more than \$160 million of that figure. The Bristol Bay commercial fishery is the most valuable in the world; it accounts for 52 percent of all private sector jobs in the region.

Bristol Bay is also important to the Pacific Northwest economy, because thousands of our commercial and recreational fishermen and businesses depend on it for a substantial part of their livelihood. Many guides from Oregon and Washington spend several months of the year working in Bristol Bay.

Washington state residents hold 658 Bristol Bay driftnet permits and 149 setnet permits. Oregon residents hold 97 driftnet and 39 setnet permits.

No one wants to see the thriving fishery of Bristol Bay become another Columbia River scenario, with commercial, tribal and recreational fisheries fighting over a small allocation of fish, the vast majority of which are from hatcheries.

Wild, sustainable fisheries such as Bristol Bay's must be protected. When damage is done to watersheds, it's very difficult to reverse, as evidenced by the billions of dollars spent on salmon recovery in the Pacific Northwest.

The EPA has the authority to protect the natural resources, jobs and regional economy of Bristol Bay.

The agency is conducting a watershed assessment of Bristol Bay, supported by Oregon Sen. Jeff Merkley and Washington Sens. Maria Cantwell and Patty Murray. A draft of the assessment will be released in late April, guiding future decisions about large-scale mining in the region.

All of those who earn their living from Bristol Bay's natural resources hope and believe the agency will find that it should prevent mega-mining there — a decision that would benefit the economy of Oregon.

Russell Bassett is executive director of the Association of Northwest Steelheaders, headquartered in Milwaukie.

from The Register-Guard

February 24, 2012

Pebble Mine Decision Looms

The Rusty Hook

Duffy

Pebble Mine.

We've all heard the words. Maybe we have formed some type of opinion on this issue already? Maybe not. Maybe we don't know enough about what stands behind these words? Whatever the case, DON'T just let the words, "Pebble Mine" bounce off and you and fall in the dirt. As a breathing inhabitant of Planet Earth, you should be very concerned about the outcome of this issue. This IS your backyard.

There is a decision looming on the impending horizon. Don't be one of the ones that says, "Oh- I wish I had done more, or if only I could have had a voice on the issue..." Well you do have a voice! And this is a conversation that we should all be a part of. Of course, we can always do more, but maybe just a few minutes of your time is enough. Maybe if we all just focused on this for a few minutes, we could make a difference.

I spent seven season's of my life up in this neck of the woods. And they say Montana is Big Sky Country... It's magical up there, and do you know why? Well, because we haven't screwed it up yet.

Ok, A Reminder: my words are not yours. You know this. I cannot speak for you. The only one who can is you. Please get informed... have some feelings on the subject. Allow your feelings the opportunity to take their natural course.

Feelings:

What I found up there on this rich patch of tundra is... Oh man, I can't even start. I can only drop my jaw in my palm and shake my head when I consider what is at stake here. It makes me sad that such a project ever became the faintest of considerations, let alone a feasible option for this location. The thought makes me queasy, nauseous. I understand that people do need to make a living. A responsible living...

Alright, those are mine. Please nurture your own feelings by exploring some of these links. It will only take a handful of minutes...

Although there may seem to be many sides to the issue, there are actually only two. Please pick one and make your voice heard

[SAVE BRISTOL BAY VS. PEBBLE MINE PARTNERSHIP](#)

[SAVE BRISTOL BAY STUDY](#)

[PEBBLE MINE PARTNERSHIP STUDY](#)

[EPA STUDY](#)

Each side has conducted studies with said, independent researchers for consideration. EPA has yet to conclude their independent study.

The Pebble Mine Partnership plans on applying for permits as early as this July.

Although many of you have seen this, it never gets old!

From [The Gorge Fly Shop: The Rusty Hook](#)

December 21, 2011

Mine threatens salmon

The Bend Bulletin

Debbie Shapiro, Bend, OR

Thank you for publishing Brian O'Keefe's Dec. 6 piece, "Oregonians have a stake in Bristol Bay-Pebble Mine Fight."

I spent 13 years fishing commercially in Alaska (including Bristol Bay) and my son currently earns much of his income from fishing Bristol Bay salmon.

I'm not against mining, but I'm vehemently against the Pebble Mine. It has the potential to destroy a way of life and create havoc within a rare, fragile ecosystem.

This last frontier creates and develops our best American source of healthy food, Alaska salmon, as well as the commerce that surrounds it.

I have been privileged to observe and appreciate Alaskan native communities, sports fishermen and the many species of wildlife that thrive in the tundra and pristine rivers. So have many Oregonians, who continue to catch, process, sell and serve wild Bristol Bay salmon, the world's largest and best-managed sockeye fishery.

The proposed Pebble Mine threatens the financial, cultural and ecological blessings of this amazing area, and puts thousands of sustainable jobs at risk. We cannot risk our healthy, sustainable salmon fishery with a mega open-pit mine in the fragile Alaska tundra.

In 1989, I fished commercially during the Exxon oil spill, then watched and felt the devastation for more than a decade. Watching the BP oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico is a reminder once again that those involved are only human and can make mistakes. There are no guarantees any mining company can contain tons of toxic waste forever.

Debbie Shapiro

Bend, OR

from The [Bend Bulletin](#)

December 6, 2011

Oregonians have stake in Bristol Bay-Pebble Mine fight

The Bend Bulletin

Brian O'Keefe

I've had the great fortune to have fished all over the world — in salt water, fresh water, tropical zones, cold water and everything in between. What started as a 30-plus year career traveling to exotic places with rod and camera began in Bristol Bay, Alaska — where I first traveled in 1975, then guided for a few years starting in 1979.

Bristol Bay is like a fishing rite of passage. Last summer, more than 50 fishing guides from Oregon earned their wages helping clients land gorgeous rainbow trout on the fly. Others went to manage camps and lodges on remote rivers. Joining them in this migration north were several hundred commercial fishermen and crew from Oregon who haul in the huge, sustainable sockeye salmon run for which the region is famed.

In 2010, over 13,000 Oregonians bought licenses to sport fish in Alaska. Bristol Bay is host to all five salmon species, as well as the largest sockeye run in the world. Up to 60 million sockeye salmon return to Bristol Bay every year, and the region accounts for nearly half of the sockeye salmon harvest on the planet. Oregon businesses recognize this sustainable wild food source and bring it to customers here, at quality grocery stores and numerous restaurants around the state that serve Bristol Bay salmon.

While there are some disagreements over fish policy here in Oregon between commercial and sport fishermen, both commercial and sport fisherman depend on Bristol Bay and there is no disagreement that this priceless place must be saved. That is why both sides have joined together to fight for Bristol Bay and their livelihoods.

What makes the fishing possible is not only an intact ecosystem, but also a healthy industry, community and infrastructure that support lots of jobs — for the people who guide, fly floatplanes and work in lodges, canneries, fishing boats, and on the docks. Their jobs and the very habitat and fishery that support them are under threat from a proposed gold, copper and molybdenum mine called Pebble.

If built, Pebble Mine would be one of the largest mines in the world, excavating an open pit mine several miles wide and 1,700 feet deep, in addition to an underground mine of similar size. All of this — in addition to massive waste tailings “ponds” held back behind 700-foot tall earthen dams — is planned for development near the headwaters of Bristol Bay in an area known for powerful earthquakes.

Thankfully, there's a broad coalition of folks working to protect Bristol Bay from the risks of Pebble Mine. Oregon has been in the fight from the start. Fifty Oregon business and fishing conservation groups have signed a letter asking the White House to support the Environmental Protection Agency's Bristol Bay Watershed Assessment to determine whether such massive-scale mining projects would have an adverse effect on the natural resources and fisheries there. If the EPA determined that dredging and fill material from mining could have such an adverse impact, it could use a power under the Clean Water Act called 404(c) authority to block development of the mine.

Oregonians need to speak up for Bristol Bay. It is part of the heritage and livelihoods of our commercial fishing fleet and our sport fishermen, and a major source of the wild salmon we purchase.

I hope you'll join us for the Save Bristol Bay Road Show at 7 p.m. Friday, Dec. 2, at the The Old Stone, 157 Franklin Ave., in Bend. This free event includes a screening of the award-winning film “Red Gold,” salmon appetizers and local brews. Plus, you'll get an update on the Save Bristol Bay campaign. For more information, see www.savebristolbay.org.

Another thing you can do is to write or call the offices of Sens. Ron Wyden and Jeff Merkley and urge them to protect Bristol Bay, helping ensure it's there for future generations.

Brian O'Keefe lives in Bend.

from [The Bend Bulletin](#)

December 2, 2011

Letters: Salmon or mining?

The Daily Astorian

Lisa Tarabochia, Astoria OR

Each June, close to 100 of my family members from Oregon, Washington and California depart for Bristol Bay, Alaska, as they have for 150 years, to fish another season in the greatest fishery in the world. I am from a fourth-generation Oregon commercial fishing family whose livelihood is dependent on the Bristol Bay sockeye salmon.

The sustainable and responsible harvesting practices of this sockeye salmon run each year provide more than 12,000 jobs and most of the wild sockeye salmon the world eats. This terminal fishery is certified sustainable by the Marine Stewardship Council, and provides one of the world's most healthful foods.

We owe our lives to the sockeye salmon, thus the importance of protecting its habitat.

As a North Oregon Coast restaurant owner and chef, we serve only foods that are fresh and in season.

We rely heavily on my family to send us sockeye salmon. Our customers expect this from us, and we will do everything we can to protect this vital industry, as we have a responsibility to the wild salmon.

Three of Bristol Bay's major rivers, the Kvichak, Naknek and Nushagak, collectively, support the greatest wild salmon fishery in the world. The Nushagak River hosts the world's largest king salmon run, while the Kvichak is home to the world's single largest sockeye salmon fishery. They also support chum, pink and coho salmon, rainbow trout, grayling, Dolly Varden and Arctic char.

The sockeye salmon are at the center of the ecosystem. These fish feed everything in the system, from invertebrates and bears to eagles, wolves, Beluga and killer whales. A negative impact on the sockeye population could result in the collapse of the ecosystem.

Tens of millions of salmon do not just support an abundance of wildlife, but also sustain native communities that have thrived here for thousands of years. This sustainable fishery is in jeopardy from a project called Pebble Mine. An international mining company plans to build one of the largest gold mines in the world at the headwaters of two of Bristol Bay's most important rivers.

Construction in this area, known for significant seismic activity, would include building the world's largest dam and a 10-square mile containment pool to hold the billions of tons of toxic waste the mine would produce.

As an Oregonian who relies on the health of Bristol Bay for my family's livelihood and heritage, I support the Environmental Protection Agency's decision to conduct a Watershed Assessment of Bristol Bay.

Given the extensive scientific research regarding the placement of the Pebble Mine in one the world's last pristine watersheds, I cannot fathom their coexistence.

LISA TARABOCHIA CLEMENT

Owner, Clemente's Restaurant

Astoria

from The Daily Astorian

March 20, 2012

Bravo to Dicks for fishery support

Kitsap Sun

Sharon Hart, Port Hadlock WA

With the recent news that Rep. Norm Dicks will be retiring, I wanted to thank him for his leadership on an issue that's close to home. Not long ago, at a Congressional appropriations committee hearing, Rep. Dicks championed protection for Bristol Bay, Alaska and its salmon.

Bristol Bay is the home of the planet's largest wild sockeye salmon run which is threatened by a massive proposal called Pebble Mine to dig an open pit gold, copper and molybdenum mine. Pebble would be the largest mine in the world, over 20 times larger than all the mines in Alaska combined and would be built right near the salmon-bearing headwaters of this productive habitat. It would produce up to 10 billion tons of toxic mine waste, being stored forever behind massive earthen dams in an area seismically active with earthquakes.

I've been commercial fishing in Washington and Alaska for over 30 years, and I'm not alone. Fishermen, boat builders, gear suppliers, restaurateurs, freight movers and consumers from Forks to Tacoma should be glad Congressman Dicks is representing our district and the fight to keep Bristol Bay salmon sustainable, wild and abundant. I appreciate his support for working fishermen and his understanding of the connections between Washington and Alaska.

from the [Kitsap Sun](#)

March 13, 2012

West Seattle steps up for world-class salmon fishery

West Seattle Herald

On March 11 locals gathered at Beveridge Place Pub to raise money for Trout Unlimited's fight against a mining corporation's plan to turn Bristol Bay, the world's most productive sockeye fishery, into a hard rock mine.

\$4,000 dollars were raised during the event. Here is what organizer Brian Cole had to say:

"The event was a great success, raising over \$4000 and public awareness for the 'Save Brystol Bay' campaign. Besides the silent auction, raffle and beer sales, individual donations and a letter writing campaign took place.

It wouldn't have been possible without the generous support of local businesses and all the great people that attended. I would especailly like to recognize the support of Hajime Sato, of Mashiko for providing abundant smoked salmon sushi rolls, and The Seattle Fish Company for providing smoked salmon, and sliders, prepared by employee Aaron. And of course the event would never have taken place without the support and hospitality of Gary and Terry, owners of Beveridge Place Pub, where the event was held."

from the [West Seattle Herald](#)

February 28, 2012

Midday Scan

Crosscut

Peter Jackson

Research is often in the eye of the researcher (or, more accurately, truth is often who pays for it.) This is generally the case when it comes to contentious environmental questions. In Alaska, the objectivity issue is brought into focus by a massive mine near Bristol Bay. It's a proposal vigorously opposed, for example, by Washington Sen. Maria Cantwell.

"The Pebble Limited Partnership, in some 27,000 pages of data and analysis, purports to provide an in-depth look at the environmental and social conditions in southwest Alaska's Bristol Bay region. Pebble vice president for environment Ken Taylor said the data, as well as ongoing studies, are critical for monitoring and ensuring that the Pebble mine project does not alter the pristine environment," the AP's Becky Bohrer writes. "The work has been dismissed by environmentalists, fishermen and others as bought-and-paid-for science that should be viewed as tilted in favor of development."

From Crosscut

February 17, 2012

Pebble mine developers aim for permitting process this year

The News Tribune

Associated Press

JUNEAU -- An executive said the goal is to move toward permitting for a massive copper and gold prospect near the headwaters of Bristol Bay as early as this year.

Ken Taylor, a vice president with Pebble Limited Partnership, said the target for moving toward permitting is Alaska's next fiscal year. That begins July 1.

The Pebble Partnership is promoting the mine prospect. Taylor gave an update on prospect studies at the state Capitol Thursday.

Taylor also took aim at environmentalists, saying environmentalism has become big business. He said any big project faces litigation by and increased costs because of environmentalists.

The project is at the center of an ad war, with critics charging that it could fundamentally change the landscape and way of life in rural Alaska.

from The News Tribune

January 1, 2012

2011: Out & About

The Spokesman-Review

Badger Lake residents challenged and postponed an aquatic weed herbicide application proposed by other lake residents.

Felt got the boot in Maryland, the first state to ban felt-soled boots for fishing to help reduce the spread of invasive species that threaten stream habitats and fish. A similar ban took effect a few weeks later in Vermont. Alaska is scheduled to ban felt-sole wading boots this year.

Building a mine beneath Montana's Cabinet Mountain Wilderness won't imperil the region's threatened grizzly bears, the 9th Circuit Court of Appeals ruled, opening the door for the first development phase of the Rock Creek silver-copper mine to begin as early as 2013.

Olympic National Park was sued for \$10 million by the family of a man gored to death by a mountain goat in 2010. Park officials reacted to the pressure by killing a goat that was showing up in campsites and launching an educational campaign to get hikers to urinate away from campsites and trails in an effort to avoid attracting goats.

Rewards were offered for poachers that caught the public's attention, including \$10,000 for the illegal killing a wolf from the Wenaha Pack in Oregon, and \$2,000 for the shooting of a trumpeter Swan in the Colville River. Neither of these efforts produced tips to solve the cases.

Birds may be impacted by the growing use of smartphone applications, field access to the Internet and recordings to flush out bird species for better viewing, some experts said.

A coalition of 360 fishing, hunting and sporting organizations from nearly every state signed a letter urging the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to protect world-class salmon runs in Bristol Bay, Alaska, from potential watershed damage by the proposed Pebble Mine.

Eddie Vedder of Pearl Jam donated a ukulele to Ferry County Rail Trail Partners auction, netting the group \$17,000 for developing the abandoned railway along the Kettle River north of Republic.
from [The Spokesman-Review](#)

November 9, 2011

"Red Gold" salmon film to be shown in Edmonds

The Everett Herald

Mike Benbow

The Edmonds Salmon Chapter of Trout Unlimited will present the award winning documentary Red Gold at meeting at 6:45 p.m. Nov. 16.

The film is about a proposed massive pebble mine that opponents say could destroy the world's best salmon fishery in Bristol Bay and its tributaries in Alaska.

The TU meeting will be at the South Snohomish County Senior Center, 220 Railroad Ave. in Edmonds. It's near the waterfront just north of the ferry terminal.

The program will also feature Dwayne Meadows, Trout Unlimited Outreach Director, who will discuss the proposed mine and its effect on an entire ecosystem.

The region is home to the largest sockeye salmon runs in North America, with 40 million returning to its waters each year.

Meadows will explain the ongoing effort to prevent the mine from going forward.

The program is open to the public and include a fund-raising raffle.

from [The Everett Herald](#)

October 21, 2011

Pro-Pebble spending had late jump

Tacoma News Tribune

Becky Bohrer, AP

JUNEAU -- The group promoting a mine project near the headwaters of Bristol Bay donated \$150,000 to defeat an initiative aimed at Pebble mine in the waning days of the election.

Records filed with the Alaska Public Offices Commission show Pebble Limited Partnership made the donation Sept. 26. It also made an in-kind contribution of \$4,168.11 on Oct. 3.

The measure, seeking to ban large-scale resource extraction activity that would "destroy or degrade" salmon habitat, was on the ballot in Lake and Peninsula Borough, where municipal elections are conducted by mail. Ballots had to be postmarked by Oct. 4.

Willis Lyford, who worked with Defend Your Rights, Vote No on the Save Our Salmon Initiative, said the \$150,000 was mostly to pay off debts, not some last-minute dump of money to affect the outcome of the election.

Campaign records show Pebble was the largest contributor to Defend Your Rights, contributing \$350,000, plus such things as clerical and staff support.

Unofficial results showed the measure passed 280-246.

from the [Tacoma News Tribune](#)

October 13, 2011

Salmon Advocates' Favorite Bristol Bay Film Returns to Seattle

Seattle Weekly

Hanna Raskin

Red Gold -- the award-winning film documenting salmon fishing culture in Bristol Bay -- returns to Seattle next week, three years after its first local screening.

Since 2008, Red Gold has become the leading galvanizing tool for activists fighting the proposed Pebble Mine project, which threatens to devastate Alaska's richest commercial fishery. Co-directors Ben Knight and Travis Rummel have traveled with the film to Indonesia, Papua New Guinea, and Bologna, Italy, where attendees at an international Slow Food conference were awed by Knight and Rummel's images of salmon migration. In the grand tradition of reel-to-reels and filmstrips shared with interested audiences in church basements, the documentary has been screened on college campuses and in restaurants.

"It gets people fired up in a way a print story and photos can't," Rummel says. "It's become the iconic film for the issue."

Rummel says he and Knight had no idea they were embarking on an advocacy project when they booked their trip to Alaska. They'd planned to make a movie about fly fishing. "The more time we spent up there, fly fishing took a backseat," Rummel says.

According to Rummel, the atmospheric nature of the film has prevented Red Gold from becoming outdated, but an update is planned. Rummel and Knight in 2009 collected new footage for an upcoming Frontline episode. "It will be much more newsy, with the nitty-gritty that we shied away from," Rummel says.

The directors are now in Washington D.C., conducting interviews for a documentary on dam removal and salmon restoration. The film, slated for release next summer, will include coverage of the Elwha River. "We're still looking at how to have a thriving source of fish," Rummel says.

Trout Unlimited's Red Gold Roadshow - taglined "2 weeks, 7 cities, 1 goal" - starts in Seattle's Leif Erikson Lodge on Monday at 7 p.m. Admission to the movie is free.

from Seattle Weekly

September 29, 2011

Letter: Supports protecting salmon, livelihoods

Bellingham Herald

Darryl Pope, Bellingham, WA

To the Editor:

I think it's great that Sen. Maria Cantwell has come out in support of protecting Bristol Bay, Alaska, and its abundant salmon if an ongoing scientific assessment by the EPA finds that this amazing natural resource would be harmed by large-scale mining. I've been fishing Bristol Bay since 1976, and I make more than half my income from salmon drift netting there. I'm also a board member of the Alaska Independent Fishermen's Marketing Association, which has represented commercial fishermen for more than 40 years and worked to protect and promote Bristol Bay salmon.

Nearly 1,000 people like me fish in the region commercially but call Washington home, and our livelihoods depend on a healthy fish population that's undisturbed and untainted by the effects of runoff pollution from mining, or a catastrophic earthquake that could rupture massive ponds that would store waste from the proposed Pebble mine.

The interdependence between Alaska and Washington from the Bristol Bay salmon fishery make both of our economies stronger and more resilient and spread the economic benefits far and wide. I'm glad that Cantwell has recognized that and taken a leadership position on this issue. Now, I hope some other politicians will join her.

Darryl Pope

Bellingham

from the Bellingham Herald

September 26, 2011

Bristol Bay is vital to American economy

The Olympian

James Wilcox, Olympia WA

Letter to the Editor:

Thank you for reporting Sen. Maria Cantwell's commitment to protect the Bristol Bay, Alaska, watershed if the science says it's the right thing to do.

I appreciate the senator's work to protect the very valuable Bristol Bay sockeye salmon and other species potentially in harm's way of the proposed Pebble Mine.

Bristol Bay's resources – including up to 60 million salmon that return there every year – are of international importance, with economic, health, environmental, and cultural implications.

Like many international fishery issues, including Norwegian-owned Atlantic salmon feedlots in British Columbia and restoring Pacific salmon and steelhead in Washington's rivers (Chehalis, Elwha, Snake and more), protecting Bristol Bay sockeye salmon is vitally important to many in Washington who value our natural resources-based lifestyle.

I hope other politicians will follow Cantwell's leadership on this issue and recognize the vital role Bristol Bay plays in the American economy.

– James Wilcox, Olympia WA

from [The Olympian](#)

September 20, 2011

Midday Scan: Tuesday's top stories around the region

Crosscut

Pete Jackson

One of this generation's signal conservation battles centers on Alaska's proposed Pebble mine: "One of the most controversial development projects in Alaska history," writes Sean Cockerham of the Anchorage Daily News. Washington Sen. Maria Cantwell has already weighed in, concerned that a massive gold and copper mine could imperil the Bristol Bay fishery. However, in a Tim Eyman-esque spirit of local control, the affected Alaskans — all 1,000 of them — will vote whether to put the kibosh on the project by revising borough law. It's an animated battle that involves an anti-mine businessman from Anchorage (he owns a nearby house), the Russian Orthodox Church (also against), the Governor's office, an Alaska Native corporation, and mining executives (who are bankrolling the opposition).

As Cockerham notes, "The project is so controversial because it straddles streams that feed rich runs of red salmon, king salmon, and rainbow trout. Pebble advocates say mining and fishing can co-exist in the Bristol Bay area and that the project would bring needed jobs. Opponents contend the mine could destroy the lucrative salmon runs the area has relied on for generations." A must read for students of the weird, kinetic intersection of Alaska personalities and politics.

from [Crosscut.com](#)

August 16, 2011

Making the Case for Canned Salmon

Seattle Weekly

Hanna Raskin

Even in the salmon-happy Pacific Northwest, where the annual arrival of Copper River king salmon is granted holiday status, tuna has salmon licked at the supermarket.

Grocery shoppers have their pick of dozens of different tunas: Most supermarkets stock tuna packed in oil, tuna packed in water, low-sodium tuna and tuna seasoned with lemon pepper. The towers of tuna cans typically eclipse the few lonely tins of salmon, which once ruled the processed fish market.

When the salmon canning industry peaked, more than 1000 canneries lined the Pacific coast from California to Alaska. Canneries were largely done in by slumping supply and changing tastes, but at least one sustainable seafood expert thinks it's time for eaters to reconsider canned salmon.

"When you're buying canned salmon, more money will go in the pockets of the fisherman we want to support," says Paul Greenberg, author of *Four Fish: The Future of the Last Wild Food*.

In a recent essay for *The Atlantic*, Greenberg claimed salmon has a clear environmental edge over tuna, which is frequently caught in the unmanaged high seas. And many tuna fishermen continue to use the controversial fishing methods which led to the creation of "dolphin-safe" labels in the early 1990s. While salmon nets occasionally ensnare marine mammals, Greenberg says the purse seiners used to capture tuna pose a far greater risk to dolphins and other sea creatures.

Additionally, Greenberg says, reviving the domestic canned salmon market could provide a strong argument for the protection of fisheries now threatened by destructive mining projects. While there's little chance of salmon canneries re-opening in the lower 48 states, where "nearly all of salmon is on human life support", Greenberg says Alaska's Bristol Bay is on pace for a record-setting salmon season. Half of the 60 million sockeye salmon caught in Bristol Bay are shipped overseas. Greenberg believes if the domestic salmon market was more robust, salmon prices would rise and supporters of the proposed Pebble Mine project would be forced to closely scrutinize how the plan would affect Bristol Bay and the economic value of its salmon fishery.

"When you buy canned tuna, you're potentially contributing to habitat destruction," Greenberg says.

"When you buy canned salmon, you're kind of contributing to habitat preservation."

So why did Americans lose their appetite for canned salmon? While refrigerators and airplanes help explain the increased availability of - and demand for -- fresh fish, it's harder to reconcile the near-disappearance of canned salmon from pantries with the enduring popularity of canned tuna.

According to Steve Milum, operations manager for the North Pacific Cannery National Historic Site in Prince Rupert, B.C., theorizes tuna became the nation's default canned fish because it can't be successfully flash-frozen. Unlike salmon, tuna "goes extra soft and mushy" when frozen, making canning a more viable preservation technique.

Greenberg suspects canned salmon is a victim of changing American tastes.

"We've tended to drift away from anything with flavor," he says. "The rise of chicken leads consumers in the direction of flavor neutrality."

At the turn of the 20th century, Greenberg says, eaters commonly dined on mackerel, herring and other fishes now derided as "fishy." The affection for pungent, oily fishes hasn't abated in the United Kingdom, where canned salmon remains a popular item.

"The British love tinned salmon," Greenberg says. "Americans know it's good for them, but they don't seem to like it."

The national disinterest in canned salmon has led producers to flash-freeze a significant portion of their catch. But canned salmon has a few distinct advantages: Canned salmon is relatively cheap (although it remains slightly more expensive than tuna), and it can be stashed in lunchboxes and stored at food banks, allowing eaters of all ages and income levels to derive the benefits of a salmon snack.

For eaters accustomed to feasting on grilled Copper River king salmon, canned salmon is a lowly substitute. But Greenberg swears an eater armed with lemon and mayonnaise -- and the knowledge that canned salmon is overwhelmingly superior to canned tuna on the sustainability front - has the makings of a delicious meal.

from Seattle Weekly

August 6, 2011

Lanny Carpenter and Gene Maltzeff are nearly neighbors in South Bay northeast of Olympia, but their bond is much stronger than that.

They are commercial salmon fishermen who both own permits to fish in Bristol Bay, Alaska, home to the largest remaining wild sockeye salmon fishery in the world.

In about two weeks, the two will join hundreds of other commercial fishermen who head north each year from the Pacific Northwest to join Alaskan fishermen in a fishery that is beyond compare in its abundance and size.

The forecasted Bristol Bay run for 2011 is 38.5 million fish, which is likely to translate into a harvest of 28.5 million fish well into late July.

Maltzeff, 60, has been fishing in southeast Alaska since 1977 on a permit that's been handed down through three generations. Carpenter, 62 and a South Sound environmental activist who also drills wells for a living, is a relative newcomer to Bristol Bay, fishing there since 1992 and the owner of a permit since 2000.

"It's not a job; it's my life," Maltzeff said. "When I'm not fishing, I'm either processing seafood or thinking about fish." "I've always wanted to go up and fish in Alaska since I was a kid," Carpenter said. "It's a totally different world, a huge emotional roller coaster."

In a good year, those few weeks on the water, where a productive set of the gill net can turn up 6,000 pounds of salmon, represent 50 percent of Carpenter's annual income. In recent years, with the well-drilling business slowed by sluggish housing starts in South Sound, it's more like 80 percent of his livelihood.

What makes Bristol Bay so special is the unspoiled habitat, including 40,000 square miles of wetlands, nine major rivers free of pollution, and the largest lake in Alaska, Lake Iliamna. The developed environment includes just a few remote villages and about 17 miles of paved road outside Naknek on the Alaska Peninsula that separates the Pacific Ocean from the Bering Sea.

The natural environment is an economic powerhouse with about 12,000 people earning a living from Bristol Bay fisheries and tourism, generating about \$450 million a year, according to some estimates. While Carpenter and Maltzeff are eager to get their 32-foot aluminum fishing boats – named Cascadia and Deluxer – in the water, they can't help but think about a huge cloud hanging over Bristol Bay that has nothing to do with the notoriously cloudy, windy June weather.

There is a mining project of epic proportions proposed in the upper Bristol Bay watershed called Pebble Mine. A partnership between a wholly owned U.S. subsidiary of Anglo American PLC and an affiliate of Northern Dynasty Minerals Ltd., a Canadian corporation, holds a mineral lease on some 153 square miles near the headwaters of two of the major rivers feeding Bristol Bay.

There's reason to believe the land hides a mother lode of minerals including gold, copper and molybdenum, and smaller amounts of silver, palladium and rhenium valued at hundreds of billions of dollars.

To reach those riches, miners would dig an open pit mine up to two miles wide and 1,700 feet deep, making it the largest open pit mine in North America. The operation also calls for an underground mine of comparable scope.

The mine would generate some 10 billion tons of waste that would be stored behind a 700-foot-high dam in the headwaters of Bristol Bay.

The mine also would require pipelines, a power plant, transmission lines, roads and a deepwater port. An area that has been lightly touched by human hands for centuries would be transformed for minerals and thousands of mining and mining-related jobs.

The project has yet to move into the permit stage, but the mining conglomerate already has spent about \$400 million preparing for that day. It's a day Carpenter, Maltzeff and a considerable allegiance of project opponents including Robert Redford and Trout Unlimited hopes never arrives.

They and many others don't think the salmon runs can survive this unparalleled threat of habitat loss and pollution.

"If they put that mine in there, the fishery will be gone," Carpenter said. "It's going to take a worldwide effort to stop it. We can't let them destroy the last great fishery in Alaska."

As a commercial fisherman most of his adult life, Maltzeff has watched fisheries in Puget Sound, the Columbia River and elsewhere succumb to habitat loss, pollution, hydroelectric dams and, yes, overharvest. Bristol Bay is living proof that pristine rivers and streams can support strong, sustainable fishing, he said.

"As fishermen, we've been chased to the end of the world," he said. "Bristol Bay is one of the cleanest places left. It's a powerful message of sustainability."

from the Olympian

March 31, 2011

Chefs fight for salmon in Washington, D.C.

KIRO News Radio

Brandi Krouse

What started in restaurants around Puget Sound in November 2009 as an effort to save one of the world's largest salmon fisheries has made its way to Washington, D.C.

A group of more than 200 chefs, retailers and food community leaders signed and sent a letter to EPA Administrator Lisa Jackson this week, urging the government to stop a proposed mine near the headwaters of Alaska's Bristol Bay.

"If we allow these mining projects to advance, we endanger a delicious and nutrient-rich food that millions of Americans value and demand," read the letter. "Bristol Bay presents an opportunity to permanently protect this wild food source that sustains an irreplaceable ecosystem and an invaluable marketplace."

The letter kicked-off "Save Bristol Bay Week" in the nation's capitol. Alaska natives, chefs, restaurant owners and fisherman will meet with legislatures and the EPA to seek protection for the waters.

Kevin Davis was among those who signed the letter. He was part of more than a dozen restaurant owners and chefs in Seattle who warned against the mine in 2009 and launched a campaign to help protect the bay.

"I don't think two years has changed anything," said Davis, Owner and Operator of both Blueacre Seafood and Steelhead Diner in Seattle. "The message is, quite succinctly, that putting the world's largest open-pit mine on the headwaters of Bristol Bay is unthinkable."

The Pebble Mine is a proposed copper and gold mine that would operate at a mineral deposit in the Bristol Bay region of Southwest Alaska.

"Based on preliminary plans, the proposed Pebble Mine would dig an open-pit gold and copper mine up to two miles wide and 1,700 feet deep," read a press release from Trout Unlimited, an Alaska-based non-profit that works to protect wild salmon and trout populations throughout Alaska. "This mine could dump up to 10 billion tons of perpetually toxic waste in the heart of the Bristol Bay watershed."

The Environmental Protection Agency has launched a watershed assessment to determine whether the project should move forward.

"Of course with mines there is the potential for environmental harm," said Rick Parkin, the EPA's senior management lead for the assessment. "I think that if the mine goes forward, it will go forward with protections to prevent those from happening."

Bristol Bay is one of the world's largest sockeye salmon fisheries and supports a roughly \$450 million a year fishing and tourism industry.

from KIRO News Radio

April 4, 2012

Show 714: Hear reports on turkey camp, bank fishing and efforts to save Bristol Bay (17:00-23:00)

Dan Small

Dan Small Outdoor Radio

Special guests: Exclusive to podcast and FM 100.5 ESPN broadcast: Duffy Kopf reports that panfish action has been slow on the Madison chain and Lake Wisconsin, but anglers are still catching walleyes on the Wisconsin River. Outdoor writer Mark Strand reports from his turkey camp in Nebraska and talks about his new e-book, Turkey Camp. (www.markstrandoutdoors.com) Nelli Williams, special projects coordinator for Trout Unlimited in Anchorage, Alaska, talks about efforts to stop the proposed Pebble Mine and save Bristol Bays wild salmon fishery. (www.savebristolbay.org) John Means, president of Bank Fishing Systems in Indianapolis, In., talks about European-style bank fishing strategies for carp and catfish. (www.bankfishingsystems.com) This weeks giveaway - A complete Wrangler ProGear outfit, pants and shirt (www.progear.wrangler.com). To enter the drawing, call 414-297-7554 or email outdoorsradio@gmx.com. Leave your name outdoorsradio@gmx.com number outdoorsradio@gmx.com mention the Wrangler ProGear giveaway.

From Dan Small Outdoor Radio

March 25, 2012

Prairie club hosts salmon presentation Monday

Telegraph Herald (Dubuque, IA)

Members of the Prairie Rod and Gun Club and of Trout Unlimited are sponsoring a presentation on Alaska salmon.

On Monday there will be a free screening of the documentary, "Red Gold: A Visit to Bristol Bay, Alaska." The presentation begins at 7 p.m. in Little Theater at Prairie du Chien High School, 800 East Crawford St, Prairie du Chien, Wis.

The Bristol Bay area is home to a large sockeye salmon fishery which faces challenges from an open pit mine proposal.

Call 608-326-2342 for more information. Special guests include guides from the Bristol Bay area

March 4, 2012

Letters: Alaska mining project lesson for Wisconsin

Oshkosh Northwestern

Ira Giese, Wautoma WI

As the ice begins to melt and fishermen and women across Wisconsin turn their focus to the upcoming trout season, I'm reminded of the trip I made several years ago to southwest Alaska to fish on Talarik Creek near Bristol Bay.

As a proud Wisconsinite, it's tough to admit that anywhere in the world has better fishing than we do, but Bristol Bay has rightfully earned its reputation as a destination for sportsmen and anglers everywhere. It contains the world's largest sockeye salmon fishery and boasts abundant trophy rainbow trout. It is a sight to behold for anyone who appreciates natural beauty. Unfortunately, Bristol Bay is under threat from an enormous development known as the Pebble Mine.

If built, it would be one of the largest open-pit mines in the world, with its billions of tons of toxic waste held back by a 740-foot-tall earthen dam. Even the slightest mishap would threaten one of the world's great wild salmon fisheries. Imagine a mine nearly the size of Lake Winnebago built at the headwaters that feed the very same lake? You would be outraged and demand action.

Fortunately for Bristol Bay and its supporters, there is a large nationwide coalition of sportsmen, commercial fishermen, conservationists, and many others who are asking the EPA to use its Clean Water Act authority, if warranted, to stop the mine. The EPA will soon release its watershed assessment, and we hope they do the right thing to protect the Bay.

In Wisconsin, we're already dealing with a controversial mining development near Ashland. Other states, including Alaska, are facing similar issues. Stopping the Pebble Mine would send a strong message that protecting our water resources is a national priority. For more information, please visit www.savebristolbay.org.

Ira Giese

Wautoma WI

from the [Oshkosh Northwestern](#)

January 19, 2012

Mushers race against the mine

The Chronotype, Rice Lake Online

Alaskan mushers Monica Zappa and Tim Osmar are making their way into the Lower 48 with 30 dogs along on a 4,000-mile trip.

Their first destination is Cumberland. Their goal is to raise awareness and funds in an effort to stop the proposed Pebble Mine, which they say will threaten the salmon fishery and environment in Bristol Bay of southern Alaska.

Zappa, a Cumberland native, and Osmar have scheduled two events this weekend in Cumberland to highlight the Alaskan way of life and their campaign against the Pebble Mine, a proposed open pit project.

The film "Red Gold" will be shown Saturday, starting at 4 p.m. at Nezy's Sports Bar and Grill in Cumberland. The film focuses on salmon as Alaska's sustainable resource.

Sunday's event at Hilltop Retreat northwest of Cumberland on Hwy. H features a dinner of salmon sent ahead to the Hilltop Retreat by Zappa and Osmar. Tickets (\$28 single, \$50 couple) will be sold at the door and includes the meal, free beer, door prizes, auctions and live music.

Sunday's program will also include an exchange of silver and gold for cash, and Zappa said she will have at least one of her dogs with her, probably Raven, a veteran lead dog.

Zappa hopes people in her native northwest Wisconsin will realize the ramifications of a mine in southern Alaska.

"I think Wisconsin and Minnesota people love Alaska in general. They may take a once-in-a-lifetime fishing trip there, and this proposed mine threatens the Alaskan salmon, most of which come from the Bristol Bay," said Zappa, at the couple's stopover in Montana on Tuesday.

"Salmon really are the epicenter of life in the summertime for myself, Tim and thousands of other Alaskans that depend on the fish," said Zappa. "Bristol Bay is the biggest sockeye salmon run in the world."

After 2 years in the 49th state, Zappa now considers herself an Alaskan. She grew up around sled dog racing with her parents, Della and the late Dan Zappa. The 2002 graduate of Cumberland High School earned degrees in meteorology at St. Cloud State University and in geography at Northern Illinois University.

But on her last study stop in Oklahoma, Zappa said she had enough of "academia." The former high school cross country skier and runner took off for Alaska by herself, flying in to Anchorage and then riding a bike south 150 miles to Kasilof on the Cook Inlet.

"I had run dogs when I was young. I thought I'd try it again," said Zappa of her dramatic detour from the Ph.D. path.

"Kasilof is the mushing capital. There are probably more dogs than people there," said Zappa.

Zappa had not yet begin to put together a dog team when she met Osmar, a commercial fisherman and champion dog musher who is the son of the 1984 Iditarod race winner Dean Osmar. Tim Osmar has finished the Iditarod 23 times.

Zappa and Osmar are now partners in dog racing and salmon fishing, and together have also picked up the fight against the Pebble Mine, which would be 15 miles upstream from salmon spawning areas.

Opponents are fighting the mine on several fronts, including petitioning the Environmental Protection Agency, the Alaskan Legislature and those agencies responsible for the region's coastal management plan.

Zappa allows that not all Alaskans are against the mine, which is touted as a economic boon.

"Although Alaska is one of the most natural and wild places on earth, the political mentality is very pro-development," said Zappa. "If the fishery is threatened we feel that it could set an irreversible precedent for valuing corporate capital over renewable resources."

Mine opponents say the 54-square mile operation would release up to 10 billion tons of waste, including acid and heavy metals. The spawning rivers of several species of salmon would be damaged, along with the Bristol Bay itself, say opponents.

Zappa also contends that the proposed mine is in an area with high natural risk of earthquakes.

In their effort to stop the mine, Zappa and Osmar organized their Mushing Against the Pebble Mine Tour. This weekend's two stops in Cumberland kick off the tour, followed by at least a couple of dog races in the Lower 48.

What was supposed to be their first fund-raising race, however, has been canceled. A lack of snow has forced officials of the John Beargrease Sled Dog Marathon at Duluth to call off the event for Jan. 29-Feb. 2.

Zappa and Osmar will now look for another race in that time frame while they wait for their other two scheduled races: the Apostle Islands Sled Dog Race on Feb. 3-5 at Bayfield, and the Upper Peninsula Michigan 200 on Feb. 17-20.

Both Zappa and Osmar race, using two separate dog teams. They will donate a portion of their winnings this season to the Save Bristol Bay campaign.

It would be easier for the pair to stay in Alaska, considering hauling 30 dogs on the back of a 1-ton truck for thousands of mile. There are multiple feeding and bathroom stops per day to satisfy the needs of Raven, Eagle, Pepsi, Polly, Moto, Lucy, Babbana, Baloo and all the other Alaskan huskies.

One feeding of the dogs takes an hour and a half.

Zappa laughs. "We just have the truck. We traveled around to races in Alaska last year, and now we felt we were ready for a longer trip."

With a red line through a circled "Pebble Mine" on their truck and caps, Zappa and Osmar hope to spread their message at races, fund-raisers and through media outlets over the next 2 months.

"We feel it is imperative to raise awareness about this issue beyond Alaska. While the problem is in Alaska, many Alaskans already have their opinion, one way or the other," said Zappa. "We feel the best way to make a difference is to continue expanding the campaign on a national and international scale."

Osmar said he experienced the fears of tainted salmon during the Exxon Valdez oil spill of 1989 and the resulting plunge in salmon prices. "I don't think we can handle another big disaster here in our lifetime." More information can be found on the Web sites "osmarracingand tours.com" and the Trout Unlimited - sponsored "www.savebristolbay.org."

Zappa said that while in the Cumberland area she and Osmar will be available to give dogsled rides.

Zappa also offers sponsorship opportunities in her dogsled racing. For more information she can be reached by e-mail at:

Ex. 6 PII

from The Chronotype Rice Lake Online

January 18, 2012

Something You Should Know About

Cumberland Advocate

Hope Lee Vicich

Normally, this column is written to shine the spotlight on something special about our community. This week, however, I have been asked by someone special from our community to shine a light on a cause outside our immediate area.

Monica Zappa, the daughter of the late Dan Zappa and Della Lane of Comstock, graduated from Cumberland High School in 2002. She went on to a college career at St. Cloud State, earning a BS in meteorology and Northern Illinois University where she earned a MS in geography. She also spent a year as a PH.D student before "academic burnout" caused her to take a chance and "do something crazy." She grabbed her backpack and bike and in June of 2010 flew to Alaska to try her hand at mushing sled dogs.

Not so far out as it might seem at first, Monica grew up working with dogs because her parents competed in mid-distance dog sled races up through 1997. Now Monica is chasing results on the mushing circuit, partnered with Tim Omar.

Tim is a champion dog musher and both he and Monica make a substantial part of their incomes as commercial salmon fishermen.

This is where Monica is asking for our help. Monica and Tim have joined forces and started the "Mushing to Save Bristol Bay (No Pebble Mine)" campaign. They have come to the midwest to compete in races in order to raise awareness and protect the wild salmon "treasure that is Bristol Bay, Alaska" from the dangers of a proposed Pebble Mine that endangers the Bristol Bay watershed.

"We're concerned not only for the fish but also for the pristine land and the subsistence way of life that it provides." Monica and Tim also state that "We feel that it's imperative to raise awareness about this issue beyond Alaska. We need to show the rest of the country that Bristol Bay and its vast salmon are a national resource that must be protected."

The team were schedule to run in three races: the John Beargrease Sled Dog Marathon (which was scheduled to start in Duluth on January 29 but has been cancelled due to poor snow conditions); the Apostle Islands Sled Dog Race starting in Bayfield on February 4&5; and the "Up 200 which be run February 16-20 and starts in Marquette, Michigan. Monica and Tim have pledged a portion of all their winnings to the Save Bristol Bay campaign.

Along the way they will be hosting screenings of "Red Gold" a movie about Bristol Bay, and fundraising salmon dinners to spotlight the dangers faced by Bristol Bay.

You can meet the Monica and Tim and catch the movie in Cumberland on Saturday, January 21 at 4 p.m. at the Isle Theater. The showing is sponsored by Nezy's Bar and Grill. The wild salmon fundraising dinner will be at the Hilltop Restaurant on Sunday, January 22.

Please get out and meet this wonderful young woman and learn about the cause she is so passionate about. Go to the dinner and taste a bit of the natural resource that brought one of our own home in order that we might look outward to help a worthy cause.

from the Cumberland Advocate